DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 189 FL 013 737

TITLE English Teaching Profile: Denmark.
INSTITUTION British Council, London (England). English Language and Literature Div.
PUB DATE Apr 83
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Creative Writing; Educational Policy; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Language Role; Modern Language Curriculum; *Second Language Instruction; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Denmark

ABSTRACT

This profile of the English language teaching situation in Denmark examines the role of English in Danish society and in the educational system. The status of English as the principal foreign language since the Second World War is noted as well as the wide usage of English as the principal medium of communication between Danes and non-Danish speakers. The system of English instruction from the fifth class of the "Folkskole" through the university is described, as is English for special purposes instruction and adult education courses. The composition of the teaching cadre, teacher training courses, and professional language teachers' associations are discussed as are English teaching materials support, the branches of educational administration in relation to English teaching, language planning, English outside the education system, British and American support, commercial opportunities for English language books and audio materials, literary societies, and research in progress. A general concluding statement can identify no weaknesses in the system and emphasizes two special features: English is fast becoming an important second language; and British and Danish specialists can engage in professional exchanges on an equal basis. Sources of further information are provided. (AMH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

The British Council

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED231189

THE BRITISH COUNCIL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DIVISION

ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: Denmark **Date: April 1983**

1. ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

The position of English as the first foreign language in Denmark dates from 1903, when it was introduced as a compulsory subject in Middle School, its pre-eminence owing a great deal to the pioneering work in the teaching of modern languages of Otto Jespersen the great Danish grammarian of English and methodologist of English language teaching; but the greatest growth in the knowledge of the spoken language has undoubtedly taken place since the Second World War following the exposure of all sections of the population to English in the media (particularly British and American films and TV programmes) and the growth of English as an international language. As a result, the standard of English as a foreign language is probably as high as anywhere in the world, and it is used widely as the principal medium of communication, spoken and written, between Danes and non-Danish speakers at nearly all levels and in the professions. It is not, however, used as a medium of instruction in other subjects in secondary education, and in tertiary education is only so used in advanced scientific research work. Its prevalence as a means of communication in business and professional circles and among the young should not obscure the fact that there are sections of the population - those living in rural areas and the older age-groups - who do not speak it at all or have only a slight, passive knowledge of the language.

Bookshops are well stocked with English and American books in the original, which are regularly reviewed in the literary supplements, in the national press and in periodicals. The only Danish authors to write in English are those of scientific and technical works, particularly of articles in professional journals.

2. ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

English is compulsory from the fifth class of Folkeskole to the tenth (ages 11 to 16) and Ministry guidelines recommend a minimum of 3 x 40 minutes of English lessons a week. German is offered as an additional foreign language from the seventh class and up to 80% of children take this option. French can be taken as an optional subject in the tenth class.

FL013733

© The British Council, London 1983

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the permission of the British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN, United Kingdom.

There are no compulsory examinations in the Folkeskole, but over 90% of pupils take an examination in at least one subject in the school leaving examination (afgangsprøve) at the end of the ninth class or the advanced leaving examination (udvidede afgangsprøve) at the end of the tenth. Success in a minimum of five academic subjects, including English and German, is the normal requirement for entry into gymnasium.

The gymnasium is the traditional path to higher education, and the proportion of Folkeskole leavers transferring to it has recently risen to over 30%. Pupils are required to take English during the first year at the gymnasium. The language majors who choose the modern language branch continue with English in the second and third years. The social studies and music branches allow the students to choose between English and German in the second and third years. The classical language branch drops both English and German after the first year. Mathematical and science students can choose between English and German for the second and third years. French is studied by all higher secondary students for all three years.

The Higher Preparatory Examination (Højere Forberedelseseksamen - HF) was introduced in 1967 as an alternative to the gymnasium courses. It has been a considerable success and now attracts 10% of school leavers; its popularity probably lies in the fact that it is designed on a modular basis, assessment is continuous, and there is a large number of optional courses which give the individual student a great deal of flexibility in choice of studies. English is, however, a compulsory core subject that has to be taken in each of the four semesters that make up the two-year course. Both the HF and Studentereksamen (the gymnasium-leaving examination) qualify for entrance to tertiary education.

A high level of proficiency in English is reached at all five Universities and University Centres, where much of the teaching is carried out through the medium of English. A wide variety of options is available to students, with a strong emphasis on social studies and historical background in addition to language, literature and linguistics. There is no fixed period for the completion of degrees and students of English spend on average eight years reading for the Candidatus Magisteri (Cand. Mag.) as a result of economic pressures which force them to combine study with paid employment. The Cand. Mag., which entails taking a subsidiary subject also (Bifag), is equivalent to a taught MA at a British university and is an essential qualification for teaching at gymnasia.

Informal links exist between the Universities of Aarhus and Roskilde, and the Centre for Cultural Studies, Birmingham; and between the English Institute, Copenhagen University and the English Departments of the Universities of Leeds and York and University College, London.

There is no Inspectorate in the Ministry of Education and no formal inspection of schools, but each department of the Ministry has specialist advisers for primary and secondary education, to advise on the curriculum in each subject. And consultants are also appointed to local education authorities and country resource centres, to advise on methodology and choice of materials.

The teaching of English for specific purposes (ESP) is limited to the Copenhagen and Aarhus Schools of Economics and Business Administration (Handelshøjskoler), with their regional departments, and to vocational schools offering commercial and secretarial courses. There are few teaching courses available offering English for Specific Purposes other than these.

Courses offered under Fritidsundervisningsloven (leisure time education act) attract considerable state support; premises are provided free of charge and teachers' salaries are paid. Such courses are mainly organised by local government education departments, educational associations, political parties

and independent organisations. Among the leading organisations that offer such courses are the Folkeuniversitet, AOF (Arbejdernes Oplysnings Forbund), FOF (Folkeligt Oplysnings Forbund) and HOF (Hovedstatens Oplysnings Forbund). The number of students following English classes in 1979-80 was 56,750; the next most popular language was German with 26,750. English is the only major foreign language which has experienced a substantial growth in the number of adult education students over the last five years. The standard of teaching still varies markedly but in recent years there have been a number of courses specifically for teachers of English in adult education; there remains a proportion without any formal qualifications, however. This is the one area where there is an appreciable number of native English teachers. Many students study for the University of Cambridge Syndicate language examinations; in 1981 there were 200 candidates for the First Certificate of Education (FCE), 190 candidates for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) and ten candidates for the Diploma examination. Adults may also get compensatory education by attending lower or higher secondary classes, usually at Folkeskole level or on HF courses. Some 15,000 adults studied English at these courses in 1980-81; this represents a sizeable increase over 1978-79.

In a country of Denmark's size, with its comprehensive education provision, there is little demand at present for distance learning facilities, although this is a subject under active review by a number of interested organisations, particularly the South Jutland University Centre at Esbjerg.

3. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Teaching in Denmark is a relatively well-paid profession and teachers work shorter hours than in the UK, while teacher/pupil ratios are lower (the maximum allowed in Folkeskoler is 1:28 and the average is 1:19). As a result of growing unemployment among teachers there are restrictions on the number of students being admitted to teacher training colleges (seminarier).

A small number of British and American teachers are on short attachments to secondary schools. There is a larger number at universities and in adult education, particularly in the private sector.

A number of links already exist between teacher trainers in Denmark and Britain. The Association of English Teachers in the Teacher Training Colleges or seminarier (SEMF) organises an annual course for its members in England, and in 1981 this was financially supported by the British Council. In addition, Association members participate in courses in Denmark organised or supported by the British Council.

There are nineteen state-funded, public and private seminarier offering teacher training in Denmark. Annual entry to these colleges is limited to 2,500 students which means that some candidates are refused entry. Entrants to teaching courses are now expected to have taken studentereksamen, HF or, exceptionally, have work experience. Courses are three to four years in length and a wide range of subjects are studied. Students ultimately choose two in which to specialise. English is the third most popular subject after Danish and mathematics. Seminarium-trained teachers can proceed later to a Masters degree in education (Cand.Paed. (Candidatus Paedagogiae)) at the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies (Danmarks Laererhøjskole, DLH), or, alternatively, attend in-service training courses organised by DLH.

Teachers of English in gymnasia are university graduates who will, for the most part, have taken English as their main subject. Graduates subsequently

take a six-month paedagogic training course (paedogogikum) combined with practical training before finally qualifying as gymnasium teachers. In 1981-82, it was proposed to limit to 300 the number of graduates accepted for this course.

The main professional associations of language teachers, including English language, are:

Sammenslutningen af Sproglaererforeninger i Danmark (SPROGSAM)
(The Union of Language Teachers' Associations in Denmark)

Gymnasieskolernes Engelsklaererforening
(The Association of English Teachers in the Gymnasia)

Seminariernes Engelsklaererforening (SELF)
(The Association of English Teachers in Teacher Training Colleges)

These organisations offer a wide range of short, weekend courses, quite often with British Council support. Recent contractions in the education budgets have resulted in teachers having to meet a far larger proportion of the cost of such courses, and this will probably lead to a fall in the number of participants.

4. MATERIALS SUPPORT

Being a small and relatively affluent country with a long tradition of effective foreign language study, Denmark does not suffer from a shortage of textbooks or other ELT materials. There is no central list of approved teaching materials and teachers are free, within certain limits, to choose whichever texts they wish to use, the choice being governed by the teacher's own aims and methods, subject to the control of the School Board. Teachers can also obtain guidance from advisers in county resource centres (Amtscentraler).

Because of the variety and range of teaching courses, and the freedom of choice allowed to teachers, it is not possible to detail the materials available. In general, in Folkeskoler, they are language-oriented, written and published in Denmark. These are supplemented in the upper classes by English-produced background material, whereas in the gymnasia, where the aim is to develop a wide familiarity with the culture of Britain and the United States, set books and anthologies in both literatures and cultural backgrounds are included in the syllabus. The recent expansion in the gymnasium entry has meant that the balance between language and literature is increasingly biased in favour of the former.

Supporting materials comprise a wide range of audio-visual aids; film projectors, audio- and video-recorders and sometimes language laboratories. Software can be supplemented by loans from at the local resource centres (Amtscentraler) as well as the national ones (Landscentralen for undervisningsmidler and Statens Filmcentral). As yet relatively little video material is available, both because of the cost and because of uncertainties over off-air copying rights. The latter are granted to schools and Amtscentraler in the case of all Danish educational TV programmes, and these are widely recorded for use in schools (radio programmes being recorded and distributed by the Landscentralen).

Virtually all established British authors are available in translation, and contemporary British bestsellers tend to appear in translation very soon after publication in Britain.

5. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO ENGLISH TEACHING

All educational administration is under the control of the Ministry of Education, which works through five directorates responsible for:

primary, lower secondary, youth and adult education, teacher training;
upper secondary education;
vocational education;
further education (tertiary - including all universities);
buildings.

The extent and nature of this control varies widely according to the level and type of institution (state or private) but it can be said that in general, in the case of school education, a great deal of autonomy is granted to the local authorities in implementing the curriculum requirements laid down by the Ministry. Thus, as far as foreign language teaching is concerned, the Folkeskoler are required to provide for compulsory English from the fifth to tenth grades, but the choice of syllabus and books is left to the discretion of the local education authorities and the school councils. At the secondary (gymnasium) level there is closer control by the Ministry, necessitated by the less flexible demands of the school-leaving exam (Studenterexam), but here too the selection of texts is left to the discretion of the school, subject to approval by committees representing parents, teachers and pupils. The Directorates can call on the services of language advisers, experienced part-time teachers, who can visit schools but have authority to act only in the capacity of advisers, and do not function as inspectors. The Ministry has no authority to determine or influence language teaching policy or curriculum in further education, but in the case of adult education it subsidizes language classes - in private and local authority institutions - and through this exercises some control over their management and standards.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

From the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century the only schooling was provided by the cathedral and monastic schools; with the Reformation most of these were taken over by the Crown, but their primary object remained that of educating the clergy, now Lutheran, and of teaching the classical languages. This remained the basic pattern of education until 1809, when it was extended by law to include the natural sciences and modern languages, principally German and French, the former being traditionally the most widely spoken foreign language as a result of geographical, cultural and linguistic ties. This did not change until the second half of the nineteenth century, with the annexation by Germany of Schleswig-Holstein and the resistance to German cultural influences which followed from this. The growth of an industrialized society and of democratic institutions resulted, in 1903, in a further radical change. A new Education Act provided for a middle school to link primary with grammar school education and for three types of secondary education - the classical languages, maths and the sciences, and modern languages with compulsory German and English. This remained broadly the pattern until 1958 when English or German was offered from the sixth grade of primary school, and

both languages from the seventh; but it was still possible to follow a syllabus that would not lead to English or German at these grades. English did not become compulsory for all at the fifth grade (with German optional) until 1975. Although English was made compulsory in 1903 at middle school level, and is now compulsory for six years at the Folkeskole (grades five to ten), it ceases to be so at upper secondary (gymnasium) level where students taking mathematics and science have the option of English or German. A foreign language is also now a core subject in vocational education (EFG), in which students must choose a minimum of 60 periods a year of English or German with the option of a further 80 periods.

It may be said, therefore, that a combination of social, economic and political pressures in this century have resulted in increasing the provision of English teaching at all levels, starting at the Folkeskole. The emphasis is on teaching it for communication purposes in response to the growing awareness of its essential role in achieving educational, scientific and economic progress. While there is provision for streaming at the Folkeskole, with two levels of English at the eighth, ninth and tenth grades (compulsory education extends only to the ninth, but 55% of the students go on to the tenth), present egalitarian trends are against this, and the majority of schools are "comprehensive", ie of mixed ability, with some lowering of standards as a result. Precise objectives and curricula for the teaching of English at the Folkeskole and gymnasium as laid down by the Ministry of Education at different levels are given in official guidelines and regulations.

7. ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Since there is no formal recognition or control of private schools of English, and no criteria by which to assess their success or standards, it would be invidious to attempt to list the most important or describe their activities and influence. The British Council in Copenhagen can provide, on request, a comprehensive list of all such schools.

Some of the larger industrial concerns have in-house language courses, with teachers attached to their personnel departments. More often, companies will employ either private schools or one of the institutions referred to in Section 2, eg Folkeuniversitetet, to run on-site language courses. The education section of the Danish Engineers' Academy (DIEU) also offers language training courses, which are open to non-members.

8. BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

There are no Council-employed or sponsored ELT staff in the Danish Ministry of Education or elsewhere within the Danish education system.

No British teachers are recruited through the Council. A number of guest teachers are recruited annually by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges on behalf of the Danish Ministry, and a small number of students taking Scandinavian studies are also employed for up to one year in the same capacity. None of these are necessarily trained teachers of English.

There is no direct involvement of British ELT staff in inspecting, advisory work, materials production or English by radio or TV, but such staff regularly participate in in-service teacher-training courses, in most cases financed by

the British Council. There is no direct teaching by British staff except that referred to in Sections 3 and 6 above.

The British Council recruits guest lecturers for a number of in-service teacher-training courses. The following were held in 1981:

Sound and Video in the Study of Foreign Languages - Copenhagen University
Exercise Types and Communicative Languages Learning - Paedagogisk Central/ Greve Kommune
Video in English Teaching - Gl Avernaes
The Third European Symposium on Language for Specific Purposes - Handelshøjskolen
The Communicative Teaching of English - Midtjysk Kursuscenter

The use of British textbooks is confined mainly to adult education classes, particularly in the private sector; audio- and videocassettes are available from the Amtscentraler (see Section 4 above), but extensive use of the latter has been held up by consideration of cost and off-air copying rights. The educational division of Danmarks Radio broadcasts a large number of radio and television programmes, including ELT and general educational programmes made available by the BBC's Transcription Services; and Danmarks Laererhøjskole has a comprehensive library of audiocassettes in English language and literature, with accompanying texts, for use in its HQ and regional departments. The British Council's Teachers' Library and Resource Centre also offers a wide range of ELT materials, including possibly the biggest collection of videocassettes in the country.

Postgraduate students can apply for British Council scholarships - there are three or four a year, open to students of all faculties. Between ten and fifteen British ELT specialists visit Denmark each year under the Council's Specialist Tours and Travel Grants schemes; while a small number of Danish education specialists go to Britain, financed under the Council's visitors' scheme. In addition the Council gives a block grant to enable thirty Danish ELT teacher-trainers to undertake an intensive study tour in Britain.

9. AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Book presentations have been made by the American government to university departments of English, and they have also presented class sets of works of American literature to some gymnasia. The American Library holds material on American literature and society that is freely available to teachers. The US International Communications Agency (USICA) organises four weekend seminars each year in American studies, including American literature, in which the British Council is invited to participate and which it has supported with travel grants to visiting lecturers.

10. OTHER AGENCY SUPPORT

Not applicable.

11. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

As already indicated there is a big market for books of general interest, particularly fiction. The market for ELT courses is chiefly restricted to adult learners. Both BBC Enterprises and independent television companies have distributors in Copenhagen for the sale of their programmes on videocassette.

The British Council makes arrangements for the Cambridge Syndicate Examinations (Diploma, Proficiency and Lower) to be held in Copenhagen and provincial centres. Between 400 and 500 candidates take them each year.

The Council also provides a comprehensive education and information service, covering language and teacher-training courses in Britain. Three or four hundred Danish students attend language courses at ARELS- and FELCO-registered private schools.

There is also a number of private language schools in Denmark, principally in Copenhagen, which recruit teachers in Britain and from the local British community.

12. CREATIVE WRITING

There is a Danish branch of PEN and a Danish Writers' Association (Nyhavn 21, 1051 Copenhagen K.), which hold regular meetings; also a Nordic Writers Association (Nordisk Forfatterråd) which holds workshops for writers from the five Nordic countries at Biskops-Arnö (near Stockholm). The only literary society in the field of English literature is the Shakespeare Society of Copenhagen (Chairman: H B Ward), which meets monthly.

No British publisher now has a permanent representative in Denmark, but a number have co-publishing agreements with leading Danish publishers.

13. CURRENT RESEARCH

Relatively little postgraduate degree work is undertaken after the Cand. Mag. for which a research project, the speciale, must be undertaken in the final two years. University and national libraries are not in general adequate for research, although their adequacy varies according to the need to rely on primary sources and their subject area.

Details of relevant research projects can be found in Research in Progress, 1980 published by Copenhagen University and edited by Arne Zettersten - a supplement to this will be available in 1983.

Major projects are being undertaken by the English Departments of Copenhagen and Roskilde Universities. Some are in the area of Error Analysis (contributors: Claus Ferch and Kirsten Haastrup of Copenhagen, and Ester Glahn and Robert Phillipson of Roskilde). Another, in Language Training with the Aid of the Microcomputer, is under the direction of Arne Zettersten, Copenhagen.

The English Departments of the five Danish Universities and University Centres which have links with British universities (see Section 2) make a small number

of grants to students of English for research in Britain in their final year. Postgraduate students can enter for British Council scholarships (see Section 8).

14. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

R H Robins, A Short History of Linguistics, Longmans, 1967.

W G Jones, Denmark, Benn, 1980.

Otto Jespersen, How to Teach a Foreign Language, 1904, reprinted Allen & Unwin, 1956.

The Ministry of Education (Frederiksholms Kanal 21, 122 Copenhagen K) publishes the following in English:

A survey of the Administration of the Educational System in Denmark.
Recent Development and Trends in the Educational System in Denmark.
Act on the Folkeskole.
The Final Examinations of the Folkeskole
The Education System
Examinations and Marking, etc, at the Upper Secondary School-leaving Examination and in the Gymnasium.

15. GENERAL STATEMENT

It is difficult to identify any obvious weaknesses in the present ELT situation. English has been the first foreign language since the beginning of the century. As might be expected from the country which - through Otto Jespersen - did more to pioneer modern methods of language teaching than any other, standards of teaching have been consistently high, particularly of the spoken language. Since the Second World War the status of English as a world language has given a country like Denmark, whose own language is not spoken outside the - admittedly extensive - frontiers of the Nordic countries, an added incentive to learn English, a process which has been helped by the continuous exposure of the population to the English-speaking media. A recent report by Danmarks Radio predicted that, by the year 2000, 80% of Danes will be able to hold a conversation in English on everyday subjects - an estimate which is only surprising in that the casual observer would be quite likely to find this true of Danes today.

There are two special features which it may be helpful to emphasise:

i. The general standard of English among those in formal education is so high and improving so fast that it might be said to be in transition, from first foreign language to second language - certainly the Council receives numerous requests from teachers for teaching materials (written, audio and video) appropriate to native English-speaking students, and for such materials in the teaching of other subjects through English.

ii. Denmark is of the greatest importance to the Council, and all other agencies and institutions concerned in ELT, as a country with whom increased contact and exchange of ideas are of mutual benefit. That is to say, Danish traditions of excellence in teaching and research in this field will ensure that British specialists will gain at least as much from the exchange as their Danish colleagues.